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ABSTRACT

This instructor's guide and student activity packet (together with a slide/tape presentation not available here) comprise a module for the postsecondary office occupations education competency area of making decisions and setting priorities. Modules for other competency areas are available separately. The purpose stated for the module is to help students obtain basic job skills in making sound decisions and setting effective priorities. The instructor's guide includes an introduction, performance objectives, special notes to instructor, time and facilities, suggestions for discussion, optional student activities, suggested evaluation criteria, keys to student activities, the narrative for the slide/tape presentation, and a list of resources and references. Contents of the student activity packet include an introduction, performance objectives, necessary resource materials, directions for completing the activities provided, a student checksheet for taking notes during the slide/tape presentation, and the activities to be completed in order to master the competencies on which the module is based. (YLB)

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OFFICE OCCUPATIONS

MAKING DECISIONS AND SETTING PRIORITIES

Audiovisual Package

Instructor's Guide
Student Activity Packet

Prepared by Diane E. Johnson

Published by
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1982

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MAKING DECISIONS AND SETTING PRIORITIES

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INTRODUCTION

This module, made up of a slide/tape presentation and accompanying printed materials, was developed as a result of a proposal funded by the Texas Education Agency to the Occupational Curriculum Laboratory at East Texas State University. Based on the results of a needs assessment of selected postsecondary office occupations instructors from across the state of Texas, this and several other modules were developed to provide instructional materials in competency areas that require formal classroom training. Selected postsecondary office occupations instructors assisted in the development, field review, and evaluation of the final product. To further insure the usability of these products, they were evaluated by members of a business advisory committee and tested by postsecondary office occupations students.

All of the materials in these modules have been developed with student needs and interests in mind and are designed with the flexibility for use as supplementary or primary teaching aids in many of the office occupations classes. The overall reading level of the printed material in this particular package is 11.72, as calculated according to the FOG Index. Individually tested sections range in reading level from a low of 9.52 (frame 36 of the script) to a high of 15.8 (frame 12 of the script). In general, the reading level scores are consistent with those which can be expected of postsecondary students. The added audio and visual stimuli help insure understanding by those students whose reading levels do not meet these expectations.

Included in each slide/tape package are a set of full-color slides, a script, a cassette tape, an instructor's guide, and a student activity packet. Each instructor's guide includes general instructions for use by an individual or in a group setting, the narrative for the slide/tape presentation, and specific instructions on how to use the materials in a particular package. The specific instructions section contains the performance objectives, suggestions for class discussion, special notes to the instructor, optional student activities, solutions for the activities completed by the students, and suggestions for evaluation of the work produced.

The student activity packet consists of a section on information the student must know in order to complete the activities, the performance objectives to be attained, any necessary resource materials, and the activities to be completed in order to master the competencies on which the module is based.

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We extend special thanks to the following committee members and their employers for their cooperation in reviewing, evaluating, and testing the materials developed through this project:

Business Advisory Committee

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Leroy Robbins, Bee County College

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In addition to these specific individuals, selected students at South Plains College and Tarrant County Junior College, South Campus, have tested these materials in their draft form and have provided valuable input for assuring that the final product meet the needs of the students for whose use this instructional package is intended.

Appreciation is also given to the following individuals, businesses, and institutions for their support, cooperation and technical assistance.

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INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

MAKING DECISIONS AND SETTING PRIORITIES

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Equipment Needed

Before using this presentation, make sure that arrangements have been made to have the following equipment available: a slide projector, a projection screen, and a cassette recorder/player.

Make sure that all equipment is working properly.

Preparations Before Class

1. Preview the slide/tape presentation and determine how it will be used in your class.
2. Plan short but relevant introductions to tell students what to look for in the slide/tape presentation.
3. Allow enough time to show the presentation in its entirety.
4. If you use handouts, be sure they are distributed after the presentation.

Procedures for Group Setting

1. Choose a point in the lesson where the slide/tape presentation will have the greatest impact.
2. After showing the slide/tape presentation, ask students to give highlights in their own words.
3. If necessary, show the presentation or parts of it again to emphasize points important to successful completion of the activities.
4. If necessary, make arrangements for students to use the slide/tape presentation on an individual basis.

Procedures for Individual Setting

1. Make sure space and equipment are available.
2. Check equipment to make sure it is working properly.
3. Demonstrate the procedures for using the equipment.

4. Have students view the slide/tape presentation as many times as necessary to understand the information given.

Instructions for Using Slides and Cassette Tapes

1. Pick up each slide by its frame so that you do not touch the film.
2. Arrange the slides in the slide tray in sequential order with the slide number in the upper right corner facing you.
3. Insert the cassette tape in the recorder/player.
4. Rewind the cassette tape to be sure it will start at the beginning.
5. Turn on the slide projector. The first slide should be projected on the screen.
6. Start the cassette player.
7. Depress the advance button at the sound of the "beep" if you are using the audible advance.

(NOTE: Review the above procedures with those students who will be using the package individually.)

Student Checksheets

Student Checksheets provide a convenient means for the student to take notes while viewing the slide/tape presentation. The points identified on the student checksheets are those the student will have to be familiar with in order to complete the activities provided.

Resource Sheets

Resource sheets contain information essential to the activities and serve as reinforcement for the competency requirements covered by the slide/tape presentation. Students should use the resource sheets as instructed in each student activity packet.

Activity Sheets

Activity sheets are working papers for students. Students are instructed to use them when completing certain activities.

MAKING DECISIONS AND SETTING PRIORITIES

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

Making Decisions and Setting Priorities is a competency-based audiovisual aid developed to help students obtain basic job skills in making sound decisions and setting effective priorities.

This slide/tape package consists of 77 full-color slides, a cassette tape, an instructor's guide, a script, and a student activity packet that could be used as primary or supplementary instructional tools in a wide variety of courses. Any of these materials, which are not copyrighted, can and should be reproduced in order to provide an adequate supply of materials for completing the activities; there are no separately printed student materials.

Performance Objectives

If a student satisfactorily completes this instructional package, the following competencies can be expected:

1. The student will be able to differentiate, orally or in writing, between decision making and priority setting.
2. The student will be able to identify decision-making opportunities in provided situation descriptions.
3. The student will be able to apply the seven-step decision-making process to situations requiring problem solving.
4. The student will be able to classify tasks according to the three categories of urgency with which they should be completed.
5. The student will be able to apply the seven-step priority-setting process to lists of tasks to be undertaken.

Special Notes to the Instructor

This instructional audiovisual package may be used in its entirety in a group setting or as a component of an individualized instruction curriculum. The instructor who desires to adapt this particular package to the specific needs of the program and the students may find the following suggestions helpful:

1. If the time constraints under which this unit are used are not sufficient to allow the student to complete all of the activities provided, select those activities that best fulfill the course outline you have prepared or the goals the students are required to attain.

2. The completion of Activity 4 relies on the prior completion of Activity 3. Therefore, Activity 3 cannot be eliminated unless Activity 4 is also excluded.

3. If you wish to teach decision making and priority setting as two separate entities, show the slide/tape presentation in two parts. Slides 1-10 are general in nature and pertain to both of these topics; slides 11-41 discuss decision making; slides 42-60 discuss priority setting.

4. Activities 1 and 2 are general in nature and can be used in any classroom setting. Activities 3 through 6 are specific to office occupations. Those instructors who wish to adapt these four activities to different settings should refer to the section entitled "Optional Student Activities."

5. If any of the provided activities cannot be used in your setting or if students require additional activities to achieve the performance objectives, refer to the section entitled "Optional Student Activities." Neither resource sheets nor activity sheets are provided for these optional activities.

6. Testing instruments are not included with this package. The following are provided as possible means of testing mastery of the competencies addressed:

   a. Use Activity 2 to test the student's decision-making ability and Activity 6 to test the student's priority-setting ability.

   b. Purchase commercially prepared resource books of case studies that require decision making and priority setting.

   c. Use personal experience to develop descriptions of situations that require decision making and priority setting.

Time and Facilities

Approximately one 45- or 50-minute class period should be set aside for a brief introduction to and presentation of the slide/tape, which can be shown in any room that can be darkened or that has individual carrels equipped with slide carousels and cassette tape players. In addition, at least one class period should be set aside to discuss decision making and priority setting as a method of reinforcing the information after the slide/tape presentation has been used. Finally, the students should be able to complete the six provided activities in approximately four to six hours. These time estimates are provided as guidelines only. The actual time spent in completing this package will vary with the amounts and types of discussion activities that take place and with the abilities of the students. The estimated time needed to complete the provided activities is based on field test results of postsecondary students.

Suggestions for Discussion (for use in a group setting)

1. Before this slide/tape presentation is used, discuss with the students the performance objectives that must be met. Also

discuss how decision making and priority setting are components of everyone's life--personally and professionally.

2. After the slide/tape has been used, review the following elements of the presentation:

   a. The difference between decision making and priority setting.

   b. The seven-step decision-making process.

   c. The three stages in priority setting.

   d. The seven-step priority-setting process.

   As a part of the review, ask students to give examples of these elements, whenever appropriate (ie., a decision-making situation or a priority-setting situation in which they personally have been involved).

3. After the slide/tape has been presented, the instructor should arrange to have guest speakers from various levels of business and industry discuss--either individually or as members of a panel--how the two competencies addressed are important in their companies and in their own positions.

4. The instructor should gather several case histories or descriptions of situation from textbooks, resource books, or from personal experience. These can be presented and possible solutions discussed in small groups. This discussion should take place before the student activities are assigned.

Optional Student Activities

Six activities are provided in the Student Activity Packet. These activities are designed to reinforce the information presented on the slide/tape and to give students an opportunity to apply their decision-making and priority-setting skills.

The following suggestions for additional activities may be used with students who need further skill refinement in these competencies or in courses where any or all of the provided activities are inappropriate.

1. If this presentation is used with students who are employed, have the students describe (orally or in writing) work situations in which they were involved in making a decision. Have the class, as a whole, as small group units, or as individuals, determine if all of the steps in the decision-making process were followed.

2. Ask members of your business advisory committee to provide you with decision-making and priority-setting situations that have occurred in their places of employment. Divide the class into small groups of five to seven members each. Allow each group to make the appropriate decisions or set the necessary priorities; then have each student rate the others' participation in the group decision-making process.

3. If you are working in an individualized instruction setting, or if you prefer to have students work individually rather than in small

groups, use the situations collected in No. 2 above as additional activities structured like those provided in the Student Activity Packet.

4. If you are teaching a course in a vocational area other than office occupations, substitute an appropriate list of tasks for the ones provided in activities 3, 5, and 6. By using tasks common to the area in which you teach, activities 3, 5, and 6 can be adapted easily.

5. Have the students individually prepare a list of priorities that they want to accomplish in class or on the job during the next week (or any other time frame). Discuss the list of priorities with each student to help that student determine whether or not logical priority-setting techniques are being employed.

Suggested Evaluation Criteria

The following is a checklist that can be used when evaluating the student's successful completion of this package. This checklist is not intended as a method of grading but merely as a means of determining whether or not the student has mastered the competencies presented in the package.

1. Activity 1
   a. The student listed a minimum of three acceptable pros for each alternative, including at least one that is shown on the key. _____
   b. The student listed a minimum of three acceptable cons for each alternative, including at least one that is shown on the key.
   c. Based on the pros and cons listed for each of the alternatives, the student chose an appropriate solution. _____
2. Activity 2
   a. The student responded to all seven questions. _____
   b. The student listed at least five appropriate alternatives to the problem, including at least three of which are shown on the key. _____
   c. Based on the pros and cons listed for each alternative, the student chose an appropriate solution. _____
3. Activity 3
   a. The student placed the tasks into their proper categories. _____
   b. Tasks placed in a category other than that indicated on the key could appropriately be placed in the category selected. _____
4. Activity 4
   a. At least one consequence is listed under each of the identified tasks. _____

b. The student correctly identified the "Rush" items. _____

c. The identified consequences reflect realistic assessment by the student. _____

5. Activity 5

a. The student listed at least one question that would help in prioritizing each task. _____

b. All of the questions listed would help prioritize the task in question. _____

c. The prioritized list of tasks illustrates that the student understands the necessity of doing "important" jobs before undertaking those that are less urgent. _____

6. Activity 6

a. The student included ten items on the "Things to do Today" list. _____

b. Items on the list were correctly identified as R, ASAP, or N. _____

c. Any mislabeled task could logically fall into the category into which it was placed. _____

d. The prioritized list of tasks illustrates that the student understands the necessity of doing "important" jobs before undertaking those that are less urgent. _____

7. Completion time for activities

a. Completion time was less than the suggested time limits. _____

b. Completion time was within the suggested time limits. _____

c. Completion time was greater than the suggested time limits. _____

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Books

Gregg Division/McGraw-Hill Book Company
Princeton Road
Hightstown, NJ 08520

The Administrative Secretary, Resource (1970), Anderson, Lee, Russon, Wentzell, Horack

Office Procedures (1980), Stweart, Blockhus, Reigel, Schroeder

Psychology: Human Relations and Motivation (1975), Laird, Laird, Fruehling, Swift

Secretarial Office Procedures, College Series (1976), Lee, Brower

The Secretary Today: An Integrated Block Program (1978), Green, Sanders, Tedesco

MPC Educational Publishers
3839 White Plains Road
Bronx, NY 10467

Office Procedures (1980), Moon

Prentice-Hall, Inc.
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632

Management for Supervisors (1978), Preston, Zimmerer

South-Western Publishing Co.
5101 Madison Road
Cincinnati, OH 45227

General Office Procedures for Colleges (1977), Fulton, Woodward, Newhouse

Secretarial Office Procedures (1977), Oliverio, Pasewark

Secretarial Procedures and Administration (1978), Hanna, Popham, Tilton

Periodicals

Business Education World (March-April, 1977, pp 11-13)

"Decision Making and Employability Skills and the Role of Cooperative Work Experience," Herr, Edwin L.

Machine Design (July 22, 1976, pp 64-68)

"Decision Making: A Little Technique Goes a Long Way," Fuller, Don

KEYS TO ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

The answers shown on these activity sheets are "possible" solutions to the problem. Other appropriate solutions can and should be accepted.

ALTERNATIVE 1: Accept the job offered by the first company and cancel the interview with the second company.

"Pros"	"Cons"
1. Assurance of a job	1. Possibility of taking the less suitable position
2. Availability of public transportation to the workplace	2. Constant curiosity about the other possible position
3. An end to "looking" for a job	3. Distance to and from the workplace

ALTERNATIVE 2: Accept the job offered by the first company but keep the interview appointment with the second company. If the second company makes a better offer or if the position sounds more attractive, call the first company back and decline that position.

"Pros"	"Cons"
1. Assurance of a job	1. Difficulty of explaining if the second job is chosen
2. Opportunity to compare the two positions	2. Possibility of future job opportunities being adversely affected through "word-of-mouth" by the first employer
3. Lack of risk taking	3. Guilt that accompanies deception

ALTERNATIVE 3: Explain the situation to the first company and ask for an additional day in which to make your decision.

"Pros"	"Cons"
1. Possibility the first company will agree to wait	1. Possibility that the terms will not be acceptable to the first company
2. Possibility of having a choice of jobs	2. Possibility that the first company will withdraw its offer
3. Self-assurance that the situation was handled honestly	3. Possibility of making a poor impression on the first employer

ALTERNATIVE 4: Decline the job offered by the first company.

"Pros"	"Cons"
1. Freedom to accept the second job, if offered	1. Possibility the first job was the better position
2. Necessity of complex explanations avoided	2. Possibility of the second job not being offered
3. Freedom to "keep looking" for the right position	3. Possibility of having no job

Which alternative would you select? _____

Activity 2

1. Yes, a decision must be made. This was determined through the call from Vince Albright, the value of his business to the company, and the report of the inventory control supervisor.

2. The only two choices available to the assistant are to refer the situation to Mary Donovan or to call the boss who is on vacation.

3. The following are "possible" solutions--other appropriate solutions should also be accepted.

   a. Supply Mr. Albright with the 700 units in stock now, and estimate the date on which the other 184 units will be available.

   b. Supply Mr. Albright with the 700 units in stock and suggest he get the other 184 units from the other local firm that produces them.

   c. Revise the manufacturing schedule and produce the additional 184 units by Friday.

   d. Contact the other local manufacturer and attempt to get them to agree to sell you the additional 184 units.

   e. Decline Mr. Albright's order.

Activity 2, continued

4.-7. Answers are not provided to these sections of Activity 2 since the answers will vary according to the list provided in section 3. The answers to these four sections should logically follow from the student's listed alternatives.

Activity 3

RUSH	Confirm luncheon arrangements for today's staff meeting
	Type an itinerary for the vice-president's ten-day trip to Toronto
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE . .	File correspondence
	Mail notices of next week's board meeting
	Prepare invoices to be mailed in three days
	Sort incoming mail
ROUTINE	Answer routine correspondence
	Design a form letter to be used to respond to requests for catalogs
	Order new plants to be placed in the reception area
	Sort magazines in waiting room and discard those that are at least a month old

Activity 4

The answers shown below are "suggested solutions" to the problem. Other appropriate consequences can and should be accepted.

Confirm luncheon arrangements for today's staff meeting

1. Luncheon may not be ready on time
2. Tables may not accommodate all of the staff
3. Menu may be incorrect

Type an itinerary for the vice-president's ten-day trip to Toronto

1. Necessary arrangements may be forgotten
2. Adequate time may not be available to prepare any "forgotten" support materials
3. Adequate time may not be available for making any necessary changes
4. Adequate time may not be available for the traveler to "double check" the itinerary for omissions or corrections

Activity 5

The questions listed under each task are "possible" questions that might be asked. In some instances, no questions are really necessary; in other instances, additional or different questions may be more appropriate. The questions listed by each student should reflect a logical thought process by the student.

Answer routine correspondence

1. What constitutes "routine"?

Confirm luncheon arrangements for today's staff meeting

1. At what time is the luncheon scheduled?
2. Is there a specific time by which confirmation must be made?

Design a form letter to be used to respond to requests for catalogs

1. Have there been many unanswered requests for catalogs?
2. How long have some people been waiting for catalogs?

File correspondence

1. How often should correspondence be filed?
2. How many times each day is mail delivered and/or picked up?

Mail notices of next week's board meeting

1. On what day is the meeting?
2. Do any of the board members live outside the city? outside the state?
3. How far in advance are notices normally sent?

Order new plants to be placed in the reception area

1. Are there plants presently in the reception area?
2. Is there a special occasion for which the plants should be ordered?

Prepare invoices to be mailed in three days

1. How many invoices must be prepared?
2. Can all of the information for each customer be found in one place?
3. What is the closing date for transactions included on this invoice?

Sort incoming mail

1. Do employees expect their mail by a specific time each day?

Sort magazines in waiting room and discard those that are at least a month old

1. Must this be done on a specific date each month?

Type an itinerary for the vice president's ten-day trip to Toronto (the vice president's plane leaves at noon tomorrow)

1. At what time will the vice president leave the office?
2. Have all of the reservations been confirmed?
3. Are there any support materials that should be mentioned in the itinerary?
4. Is there any information in the itinerary that has not yet been determined?

(NOTE: Items that are starred (*) may be interchanged with other tasks as noted.)

1. Confirm luncheon arrangements for today's staff meeting.
2. Type an itinerary for the vice president's ten-day trip to Toronto.
3. Mail notices of next week's board meeting.
4. Prepare invoices to be mailed in three days.
5. Sort incoming mail.
6. File correspondence.
7. Answer routine correspondence.
8. Design a form letter to be used to respond to requests for catalogs.

*9. Order new plants to be placed in the reception area.

*10. Sort magazines in waiting room and discard those that are at least a month old.

Activity 6

THINGS TO DO TODAY

DAY _____

Appointments:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

	Done ✓
1. Confirm meeting room	☐
2. Confirm names of managers who will attend meeting	☐
3. Phone final luncheon count to caterer (by 10 a.m.)	☐
4. Distribute mail (at 10 a.m.)	☐
5. Meet with A. Stevens to finalize agenda	☐
6. Type and duplicate agenda	☐
7. Prepare name tags for meeting participants	☐
8. Gather materials for meeting packets	☐
9. Prepare meeting packets	☐
10. Telephone clients to confirm appointments for tomorrow	☐
11. Answer routine correspondence	☐
12.	☐
13.	☐
14.	☐
15.	☐

SLIDE NO.	SLIDE DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE
1	Focus/Synchronize Slide	OCL Logo
2	Title Slide	Making Decisions and Setting Priorities
3	Stop Slide	Before beginning this slide/tape presentation, stop the recorder and locate the Student Checksheet in your Student Activity Packet. This checksheet provides a convenient means of taking notes on those portions of the presentation that you will need to know in order to confidently complete the activities that accompany this slide/tape package.
4	The employment section of the classified advertisements	Have you looked at the employment advertisements in a newspaper lately? One glance will reveal that the demands of employers have broadened. No longer will employers accept workers whose job skills are limited to taking shorthand, or typing, or running a cash register, or driving a car. The pace of business and industry has changed. Today's employers want workers who can think as they do their jobs.
5	Several advertisements containing this type of statement	More and more often, we see employers demanding workers who can work alone,
6	Several advertisements containing this type of statement	who can make decisions,
7	Several advertisements containing this type of statement	and who can supervise other employees.
8	DECISION-MAKING ABILITY PRIORITY-SETTING ABILITY	The employee who can handle the day-to-day flow of work with little or no supervision has acquired two important assets: the ability to make decisions and the ability to set priorities.
9	DECISION MAKING Choosing Between Alternatives	Decision making occurs when a person chooses between two or more alternatives.
10	PRIORITY SETTING Determining the Order in Which Events Will Occur	Priority setting occurs when a person determines the order in which a sequence of events will take place.

SLIDE NO.	SLIDE DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE
11	Clothing, food, sporting equipment set out on a table	Decision making is not unique to the workplace. For example, you make decisions about the clothes you wear, the foods you eat, the activities you pursue in your leisure time.
12	A secretary at work	The decision-making ability you use in your personal life must carry over into your professional life. Promotions to higher-level, better paying jobs are often given to those employees who show that they can make sound decisions. The secretary who can handle customers when the boss is out of the office is likely to be promoted to office supervisor.
13	An assistant manager at work	The assistant store manager who can judge when items should be sold at reduced prices will probably be promoted to manager.
14	STRUCTURED DECISIONS	Basically, there are two types of decisions you might be called upon to make--structured decisions
15	UNSTRUCTURED DECISIONS	and unstructured decisions.
16	Structured Decisions Decisions Based on Predetermined Guidelines or Made According to a Definite Pattern	Structured decisions are made according to a definite pattern or set of rules. For example, a company may have guidelines for handling customer requests for sample products. Each time such a request is received, you need only follow the guidelines already established.
17	UNSTRUCTURED DECISIONS DECISIONS THAT ARE NOT MADE ACCORDING TO A PREDETERMINED PATTERN OR GUIDELINE	Unstructured decisions often omit some of the steps in the decision-making process, because of the decision maker's past experience. Because each person makes these kinds of decisions in a different way, we will not discuss this problem-solving technique. Instead, we will concentrate on improving your ability to make structured decisions
18	22	Decision making always involves a risk that the choice made will be the wrong one. You can reduce this risk factor, however, by following a proven decision-making process. 23

SLIDE NO.	SLIDE DESCRIPTION		NARRATIVE
19	DECISION-MAKING PROCESS 1. Identify the Problem 2. Recognize Choices Exist 3. Generate Alternatives 4. Evaluate Alternatives 5. Select Best Alternative 6. Implement Plans 7. Evaluate Results		This process will help you make structured decisions. As we study the process, remember that you will be judged on how good your decisions are. The number of decisions you make will have little or no effect on that judgment.
20	The seven steps in the decision-making process with step 1 highlighted		The first step in this process is identification of the problem. This does not mean that you must search for these problems--they will be easily identifiable simply by the nature of what occurs in the workplace, or they will be related to you by someone who is aware that they exist.
21	The assistant	A meeting with 3 or 4 people	Assume you are employed as the administrative assistant to the general manager of a manufacturing firm. Your boss is in an important meeting with several stockholders and has asked not to be disturbed.
22	The supervisor on the telephone	The assistant on the telephone	A half hour after the meeting begins, the assembly line supervisor telephones and insists on speaking with your boss about an emergency that must be taken care of immediately.
23	The assembly line supervisor		In this instance, the decision-making situation has been brought to your attention by someone who is aware of a problem that needs to be solved. You cannot help but recognize that a problem exists and that you must decide whether or not to interrupt your boss's meeting.
24	The seven steps in the decision-making process with step 2 highlighted		Recognizing that choices exist is the second step in the decision-making process. This step requires only that you realize that you can do something to resolve the problem or that you can do nothing and hope the problem resolves itself.
25	A manual entitled Emergency Procedures		If the company for which you work has guidelines for handling emergencies, you have no decision to make. The guidelines will outline the steps to be taken in any emergency situation.
26	The seven steps in the decision-making process with step 3 highlighted		Let's assume, however, that the company for which you work does not have such guidelines and that you must decide how to handle the problem. The third step requires that you identify ways in which the problem might be resolved.

SLIDE NO.	SLIDE DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE
27	The assistant talking with the supervisor / The assistant walking into the manufacturing plant	In order to think of alternatives, you must learn all you can about the problem. In the situation described in the previous slides, there are only two ways to find the information you need. You must either rely on the assembly line supervisor to give you accurate information, or you must observe the situation yourself.
28	1. Personally resolve the problem	After learning the precise nature of the problem, you may find that the emergency we have been discussing allows for at least five alternative solutions. 1. You could handle the situation yourself, if you have the authority to do so.
29	2. Delegate resolution of the problem	2. You could instruct the assembly line supervisor to solve the problem, if that individual has the authority to do so.
30	3. Inform your employer of the problem	3. You could interrupt the meeting and turn the problem over to your employer.
31	4. Inform another executive of the problem	4. You could refer the supervisor to another person in the company, such as a vice-president, who has the authority to make decisions.
32	5. Postpone resolution of the problem	5. You could wait until your employer's meeting is over and allow resolution of the problem to be postponed.
33	The seven steps in the decision-making process with step 4 highlighted	Once you know what your alternatives are, you must review them and evaluate each one according to its merits. As you evaluate each alternative, you should be able to judge its worth as a solution. Would it probably work? Could it possibly work? Is it unlikely that it would resolve the problem?
34	The assistant in frame 21 with the word "terminated" composited over the slide	To evaluate the alternatives, look at the possible consequences of each of them. For example, 1. If you attempt to solve the problem yourself, you must be sure that you have the authority to do so. You could further complicate the situation; and if you did not have the necessary authority, this action could result in your boss's anger or even in your being fired.
35	The employer looking angrily at the assistant	2. If you instruct the assembly line supervisor to solve the problem, you may subject yourself to resentment from that supervisor and to anger from your employer. Before you give orders to other employees, be sure that you have been given the authority to do so--and that the other employees are aware of that authority.

SLIDE NO.	SLIDE DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE
36	The assistant opening the door to the meeting room	3. If you interrupt the meeting, you may have to face your boss's anger because you did not follow the orders given to you. At the same time, your boss might be grateful for being informed.
37	The assistant pointing the way to another executive's office	4. If you refer the supervisor to another person with decision-making responsibility, your employer may become upset at not being informed immediately. Or, your boss may praise you for making sure that someone in authority was informed.
38	The assistant just sitting at the desk	5. If you elect to do nothing until your boss's meeting is over, you may risk anger as well as legal action if the situation becomes critical.
39	A list of pros and cons on one of the solutions to the problem discussed	If time is not a factor, you can make this process easier by preparing a list of the "pros" and "cons" of each alternative. Even if time is a factor, you can mentally prepare such a list.
40	Closeup of the top portion of the list in frame 39	All you have to do is think first of all of the positive results that could happen and then of all of the negative results that might occur if a particular alternative is put into action.
41	A closeup of the ends of the two lists in frame 39	Then compare the two lists. If your list of "cons" is much shorter than the list of "pros," the alternative would likely be a suitable choice.
42	The seven steps in the decision-making process with step 5 highlighted	After weighing, either mentally or on paper, all of the possible consequences of each of the alternatives, you should choose that alternative or combination of alternatives which experience or reasoning tells you would be the best course of action.
43	The seven steps in the decision-making process with step 6 highlighted	Once you have selected an alternative, you have actually set a goal and have only to put your plan into action. In the case we have been discussing, you would probably knock at the door of the meeting room, apologize for interrupting the proceedings, explain the situation, giving as many details as are known to you, and ask how your employer would like to handle the problem.
44	The seven steps in the decision-making process with step 7 highlighted	The final step in the decision-making process is really a learning experience. You evaluate what has taken place--the decision you made and the results of that decision.
45	Several people congratulating the assistant	An effective decision is one that is successful and is accepted by others. If the problem was solved satisfactorily and your decision to interrupt the meeting was accepted as the best way to solve the problem, you can assume your decision was sound.

SLIDE NO.	SLIDE DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE
46	Review	If the problem remained unsolved, or if the situation got even worse, you would need to review all that took place to learn what other actions would have been more appropriate.
47		This decision and all of the elements that combined to make this decision will become a part of the information you possess. It will give you one more past experience on which to base other, future decisions.
48	A group of people sitting around a conference table	The decision-making process we have discussed will work well in all situations that require problem solving. However, if you are a part of a group charged with making a decision, there are a few additional suggestions you should keep in mind.
49	A group with one person looking angry	First, avoid being defensive. Remember that you are not the only person who has an opinion. Each member of the group may feel strongly for or against any suggestion that is made. If your suggestions are not readily accepted, it is only because the group is seeking the one best solution to a problem. All alternatives have to be weighed before one can be selected.
50	A group member explaining a suggestion by using a wall chart or some other prop	Second, provide complete information about any suggestion you make. Explain in detail the ideas you have so that every group member completely understands all aspects of your plan.
51	A group with everyone speaking except one person who is sitting silently "on the fringes"	Third, get everyone in the group involved in the discussion. If one person seems to be left out, ask a question to get that person's attention. Sometimes the person who seems to have the least to contribute will actually have the best solution to the problem.
52	A group with members sitting and looking over notes, handouts, etc.	Fourth, be patient during the long, quiet pauses that can develop. If a suggestion has been made, the members of the group need time to think about all of the pros and cons of that suggestion. This thinking time is vital if the best choice is to be made.
53	The group voting with one member casting a dissenting vote	Fifth, never try to force your opinion on another member of the group or to allow the rest of the group to influence your vote. Each member of a group has the right to differ in opinion with all of the other members--regardless of the reason.

SLIDE NO.	SLIDE DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE
54	One member of the group speaking to the remaining members	Finally, before any decision is reached, summarize the discussion that has taken place and restate each of the alternatives presented. At the end of a long, involved session, people often need to be reminded of what has taken place during the early stages of the meeting. By summarizing and restating, you will give the members of the group the chance to review each of the alternatives before reaching a final decision
55	A paycheck surrounded by the items it will purchase	Priority setting, like decision making, is not a skill that you automatically acquire by going to work. Each of us sets priorities in our daily lives--but the skills we use to do this often become more refined after we accept our first job. For instance, you might decide that with part of your earnings you want to purchase a new car, new furniture for your home or apartment, a new wardrobe, and a trip to Hawaii.
56	The illustration shown in frame 55 with the items numbered (prioritized)	Obviously, your earnings will not allow you to make all of these purchases at the same time. Instead, you must decide which of these is the most important to you. The process of deciding which event will take place first, which will take place second, and so forth, <u>is</u> priority setting.
57	A secretary typing a letter / A secretary mailing a letter / A blueprint / A house	Priority setting, like decision making, is based on information you already possess. However, priority setting also relies on your ability to sequence events logically. Sometimes, one event <u>must</u> occur before another can take place. A letter <u>must</u> be typed before it can be mailed; a blueprint <u>must</u> be drawn before a house can be built. At other times, priority setting is more complex and requires close scrutiny of all of the events that will take place.
58	A cartoon character thinking of all of the things that must be done in one day	In business, the ability to prioritize is a highly valued skill. This skill will enable you to look at everything that must be done in a given time period and to organize the work in such a way that everything will be completed on time.
59	PRIORITY-SETTING PROCESS Part I--Communication Part II--Planning Part III--Action	There are three parts to priority setting--communication, planning, and action. The first two parts, communication and planning, help you prepare for the actual setting of priorities, which can be referred to as the action.
60	Part I--Communication	Initially in this process, communication takes place. This does not mean that communication is a step in priority setting; it just means that communication often provides a basis for the way we set priorities.

SLIDE NO.	SLIDE DESCRIPTION	NARRATIVE
61	Someone listening to another speak	We listen to customers, to supervisors, to ourselves.
62	Someone reading a letter	We read letters, interoffice communications, professional journals, reports.
63	Someone watching others work	We observe the non-verbal communication of smiles, frowns, frustrated stances.
64	Part II--Planning	The second stage, planning, relies on the ability of the worker to be organized, to adhere to schedules, to observe deadlines, and to be aware of future occurrences.
65	A list entitled "Things to do Today"	If you want to observe someone who has little problem setting priorities, look for the person who makes lists. The lists that people make are statements of the tasks that must be accomplished. This is, in a sense, organization. The individual is organizing the time available by noting what must be accomplished during that time.
66	A person in a business suit saying to a receptionist, "I am here for a ten o'clock appointment." A clock on the receptionist's desk reading 9:50	The person who makes lists and schedules events usually works effectively under time constraints, is rarely late for an appointment, and usually completes work before it is called for.
67	A person wearing tags labeled "organized," "conscientious," "punctual," "efficient," "effective"	Finally, this same person--that organized schedule maker who meets whatever deadlines are imposed--is aware of what might occur in the future to affect the work being done. This person has all of the qualities needed by someone who must set priorities.
68	Part III--Action 1. Recognize Alternatives 2. Determine Consequences 3. Weigh Consequences 4. Ask Questions 5. Schedule the Sequence 6. Implement the Schedule 7. Evaluate the Action Taken	Priority setting, the action part of the process, is similar to decision making. Both of these processes involve following a set pattern--a series of seven steps; and both require the person to make choices.

SLIDE NO.	SLIDE DESCRIPTION		NARRATIVE
69	The seven steps in the priority-setting process with step 1 highlighted	A list entitled "Things to do Today"	In order to set priorities that will allow you to do the urgent or important things first, you must recognize alternatives. When you make a list of all of the tasks that must be done, you are identifying alternatives. To get the priority-setting process off to a good start, be careful not to list more tasks than you can do in the time available.
70	The seven steps in the priority-setting process with step 2 highlighted	A post office with the window closed and the secretary standing outside holding a letter	Once you have identified all of the tasks to be done, you must determine the consequences that could result from scheduling one event first, another last, and so forth. For example, if a secretary prioritized a list of tasks to be completed and decided that typing dictated letters would be the last task to be done, what might result from this task's placement on the schedule? Maybe nothing. But the letters might not get mailed until the next day, and this could cause the loss of a customer to another firm that responded immediately.
71	The seven steps in the priority-setting process with step 3 highlighted	A scales	Next you must weigh the consequences that could result from the order in which you scheduled the tasks. Which task must be completed in order to do another? Which task could be postponed with the least amount of damage resulting? What would happen if you delayed doing an important task only to find that you did not have enough time to finish it?
72	The seven steps in the priority-setting process with step 4 highlighted	A question mark	While weighing the consequences of various schedules, ask any questions that could affect the order in which you schedule the tasks. You might ask yourself or others questions such as "Is there a deadline we must meet on any of these jobs?" or "What will that customer do if this job is not finished today?" Just be sure to remember that those tasks that have deadlines attached to them should be scheduled early in the day.
73	The seven steps in the priority-setting process with step 5 highlighted	The list used frame 69 with the various tasks numbered as prioritized	If you have carefully examined all of the possible consequences of the actions you might take, you should be able to confidently schedule the sequence of the tasks. This can be done by numbering the tasks shown on your list or by rewriting the list in the order in which you will actually do the tasks.

SLIDE NO.	SLIDE DESCRIPTION		NARRATIVE
74	The seven steps in the priority-setting process with step 6 highlighted	An employee at work	Once the schedule has been set, you implement the schedule by doing the tasks in their numbered order. To make this step as easy as possible to do, plan a flexible schedule. Allow time during each day for interruptions that might occur and for tasks that might have to be added to your list.
75	The seven steps in the priority-setting process with step 7 highlighted	An employee sitting and looking at the list, "Things to do Today"	Finally, when all of the tasks have been completed, take a few minutes to sit back and evaluate the action you took. Ask yourself questions such as: 1. Did I meet all of the deadlines that were set? 2. Did I complete all of the tasks on my list in the order in which they were sequenced? 3. Is there anything I could have done differently that would have made my job easier? 4. Have I learned anything that will help me in the future? If so, what?
76	A cartoon character faced with deciding between two items		As you can see, both decision making and priority setting occur in each of our lives long before we become a part of the work force. However, by using the brief outline developed for each of these processes, you can streamline these two valuable skills and insure that the decisions you are called upon to make and the priorities you set are supported by logical thinking and sound judgment.
77	Credits Slide		

STUDENT ACTIVITY PACKET

MAKING DECISIONS AND SETTING PRIORITIES

STUDENT ACTIVITY PACKET

Introduction

Employees at all levels are faced with making decisions and setting priorities every day. Many employers and supervisors determine promotion of employees to higher level, more responsible positions by evaluating how effective the potential "promotee" is at making sound decisions and setting logical priorities. The employee who anticipates moving into these higher paid, more prestigious positions must perfect decision-making and priority-setting skills.

Performance Objectives

After satisfactorily completing this instructional package, you will be able to:

1. Differentiate, orally or in writing, between decision making and priority setting.
2. Identify decision-making opportunities in provided situation descriptions.
3. Apply the seven-step decision-making process to situations requiring problem solving.
4. Classify tasks according to the three categories of urgency with which they must be completed.
5. Apply the seven-step priority-setting process to lists of tasks to be undertaken.

Materials

*Student Checksheet for use with slide/tape presentation
*Resource sheet for Activities 1-6
*Activity sheets for activities 1, 5, and 6
Correction materials
Dictionary or word book
Pen or pencil
Typewriter
Typing paper

*These materials are provided as a part of this activity packet.

Directions

This packet contains six activities. Each activity is detailed on the resource sheet which contains instructions and/or needed information. In addition, activity sheets are provided when they are necessary for the completion of the activity. To complete each of the activities,

follow these steps:

1. Carefully read the instructions for the activity.
2. Assemble any materials you will need to complete the activity.
3. Complete the work called for in the activity.
4. Check over your work for completeness and accuracy.

When all of the activities have been completed, submit them to your instructor for evaluation.

(NOTE: The provided activities have been sequenced so that you can work from simple, relatively uncomplicated tasks to more difficult assignments. Therefore, it is recommended that you complete the activities in the order in which they are presented.)

STUDENT CHECKSHEET

(To Be Used With Slide/Tape Presentation)

This sheet is provided as a convenient means of taking notes during the slide/tape presentation. The answers to the questions presented here will be useful when completing the activities that accompany this presentation.

1. Define decision making.

2. Define priority setting.

3. What are structured decisions?

4. What are unstructured decisions?

5. List the seven steps in the decision-making process.

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

   e. _____

   f. _____

   g. _____

7. Name six techniques that are useful in group decision making.

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

   e. _____

   f. _____

8. Name the three stages of the priority-setting process.

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

9. List the seven steps in priority setting.

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

   d. _____

   e. _____

   f. _____

   g. _____

RESOURCE SHEET

Activity 1

Instructions

1. Carefully read the situation described below.
2. On the activity sheet provided, list at least three "pros" and three "cons" for each of the alternatives shown.
3. Some of the "pros" and "cons" you list may apply to more than one situation.

Situation

You have recently finished two years of training at a community college and have been applying for jobs with several different companies.

This morning Company A, with which you interviewed yesterday, called and offered you a position. The position pays well, offers excellent fringe benefits, and is located in the heart of the business district in downtown Dallas. The location of this company is approximately ten miles from your home. You could either take public transportation (a bus) to work, or you could drive to work and park in one of the many parking lots that rent space by the hour or by the day. The firm wants to have your answer today. If you do not accpet the position today, they will try to find another person to fill the job. If they do not find someone suitable, the position may still be available tomorrow.

You have another interview scheduled for tomorrow morning with Company B, a firm that offers the same pay and benefits as does Company A. The one major difference is that Company B is located outside the city, approximately three miles from your home. Public transportation does not go to this company, but the company does provide a free parking lot for its imployees. Since you have your own car, you would have no problem driving to and from work.

Based on the information available and on your sense of honesty and fair play, make a decision. Decide if you should accept the job offer from Company A or if you should wait to make a choice (if one is still available) after you have interviewed with Company B.

Activity 2

Instructions

1. Carefully read the situation described below.
2. Carefully read the additional information provided.
3. Using the questions provided, work through the decision-making process. Record your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Situation

You are employed as the assistant to the production manager of a small manufacturing firm that produces decorative and functional wrought iron railings, posts, light fixture bases, and similar items. Your supervisor, the production manager, is on vacation for two weeks and has left you in charge.

This morning you received a call from Vince Albright, a local contractor with whom your firm has done business for many years. Mr. Albright explains to you that he was in the middle of constructing a large apartment complex and that he ran out of needed wrought iron railings. The original plans for the complex called for patio walls to be constructed of brick, but the owner is now demanding that three-foot wrought iron railings be placed across the front of each patio. Mr. Albright needs 884 three-foot-by-ten-foot railings by Friday (four days from today).

You assure Mr. Albright that you will do all you can to fulfill his needs and that you will get back to him by 5 p.m. today. When you phone the warehouse, the inventory control supervisor informs you that there are only 700 of the needed units in stock. The production foreman informs you that their rotation schedule shows that they will not be producing any of the needed items for three more weeks.

Additional Information

1. You have been given the authority to make routine decisions, but you have not yet been given authority to make major production or policy decisions.
2. Mr. Albright is a valued customer and represents your company's largest account; therefore, your supervisor always tries to accommodate Mr. Albright's needs.
3. You have your boss's phone number in case of an emergency.
4. Your boss's immediate supervisor is Mary Donovan, the general manager. Ms. Donovan prefers that the department managers solve the problems that arise in their individual areas.
5. If your firm loses the Albright account, the personal responsible for the loss will probably be terminated.
6. One other local firm produces wrought iron railings. Your firm has sometimes "helped them out" when they were short of items needed to fill an important order.

The Activity

On a separate sheet of paper, work through the decision-making process by providing answers to the following questions and instructions.

1. Must a decision be made in the situation described? (If so, how did you determine this?)
2. Basically, what two choices exist for you in making a decision?

3. Detail at least five alternative solutions to the problem that you might offer as suggestions.
4. List the "pros" and "cons" of each alternative you have identified.
5. After examining your list of "pros" and "cons," select the alternative you feel is the most appropriate.
6. Show the steps you would take in implementing the plan you have selected; take into consideration the restrictions imposed upon your decision-making responsibilities.
7. Assume you actually carried out the plan you selected. Evaluate your actions by listing at least three things that might occur because of the decision you made.

Activity 3

Instructions

1. On a separate sheet of paper, type three headings--Rush, As Soon As Possible, Routine--leaving room below each heading to insert a list of activities.
2. Carefully examine the list of tasks shown below.
3. Assign each task to one of the categories you have listed on a separate sheet of paper. Determine the proper category by determining the urgency with which each task should be undertaken.

List of Activities

Answer routine correspondence

Confirm luncheon arrangements for today's staff meeting

Design a form letter to be used to respond to requests for catalogs

File correspondence

Mail notices of next week's board meeting

Order new plants to be placed in the reception area

Prepare invoices to be mailed in three days

Sort incoming mail

Sort magazines in waiting room and discard those that are at least a month old

Type an itinerary for the vice president's ten-day trip to Toronto (the vice president's plane leaves at noon tomorrow)

Activity 4

Instructions

1. Locate the list of "Rush," "As Soon As Possible," and "Routine" activities you prepared in completing Activity 3. You should have two items listed under the "Rush" heading.

2. On a separate sheet of paper, type the description of each of these two "Rush" activities, allowing space below each listing to insert a description of possible consequences.
3. Under each heading, type a list of the consequences that could result if the item shown in the heading is not the first task undertaken.

Activity 5

Instructions

1. Locate the activity sheet to be used with this activity.
2. Below each task listed on the activity sheet, list those questions (if any) that you would ask yourself, another employee, or your supervisor to help you determine the order in which the activities would be scheduled for completion.
3. On a separate sheet of paper, prioritize the list of tasks discussed here and in Activity 3, by retyping and numbering the activities in the order in which they would be undertaken.

Activity 6

Instructions

1. Locate the activity sheet to be used with this activity.
2. Assume that you must finalize plans for a department managers' meeting that is scheduled from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. tomorrow. In addition, you must also take care of your regular office duties. All of the jobs you need to do today are listed on the "Things to do Today" list shown below. The starred items are directly associated with the meeting.
3. Mark each of the tasks on the provided list with R (rush), ASAP (as soon as possible), or N (routine).
4. Within each category, determine the priority of the tasks listed.
5. On the activity sheet provided, record the tasks in the order in which they should be completed.
6. Mark each task on your new list with R, ASAP, or N.

Things to do Today

*Confirm meeting room

*Type and duplicate agenda

*Phone final luncheon count to caterer (by 10 a.m.)

Distribute mail (daily at 10 a.m.)

*Meet with A. Stevens to finalize agenda

Answer routine correspondence

Telephone clients to confirm appointments for tomorrow (before 4 p.m. daily)

*Gather materials for meeting packets

a. Notepads
b. Pens
c. Copies of agenda
d. Minutes of previous meeting
e. Copies of committee reports
f. Prepared name tags

*Prepare name tags for meeting participants

*Confirm (by telephone) names of managers who will attend meeting

*Prepare meeting packets for each participant

ACTIVITY SHEET

Activity 1

ALTERNATIVE 1: Accept the job offered by the first company and cancel the interview with the second company.

"Pros"	"Cons"
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

ALTERNATIVE 2: Accept the job offered by the first company but keep the interview appointment with the second company. If the second company makes a better offer or if the position sounds more attractive, call the first company back and decline that position.

"Pros"	"Cons"
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

ALTERNATIVE 3: Explain the situation to the first company and ask for an additional day in which to make your decision.

"Pros"	"Cons"
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

ALTERNATIVE 4: Decline the job offered by the first company.

"Pros"	"Cons"
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Which alternative would you select? _____

ACTIVITY SHEET

Activity 5

Answer routine correspondence

Confirm luncheon arrangements for today's staff meeting

Design a form letter to be used to respond to requests for catalogs

File correspondence

Mail notices of next week's board meeting

Order new plants to be placed in the reception area

Prepare invoices to be mailed in three days

Sort incoming mail

Sort magazines in waiting room and discard those that are at least a month old

Type an itinerary for the vice president's ten-day trip to Toronto (the vice president's plane leaves at noon tomorrow)

ACTIVITY SHEET

Activity 6

THINGS TO DO TODAY

DAY_____

Appointments:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

	Done ✓
1. _____	☐
2. _____	☐
3. _____	☐
4. _____	☐
5. _____	☐
6. _____	☐
7. _____	☐
8. _____	☐
9. _____	☐
10. _____	☐
11. _____	☐
12. _____	☐
13. _____	☐
14. _____	☐
15. _____	☐